

WASHINGTON, DC- Today, Congressman Jim Costa (D-Bakersfield) announced that a total of \$393,816 has been released to Kern County organizations to combat homelessness. These funds are being awarded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP), and were made available in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

“Providing food and shelter for those weathering the worst of this economic storm must be a priority,” said Costa. “As families lose their homes and workers lose their jobs, food banks and homeless shelters must keep up with the increased demand in order to aid Valley families. Without this extra funding, many organizations would have been forced to turn away even more people during these tough times.”

Today's ARRA funds come in addition to FEMA's \$200 million annual FY 2009 allocation announced in December. EFSP funds are not to be used for budget shortfalls or excessive administrative overhead, but for direct assistance to those most in need in our community. United Way of Kern County is responsible for distributing the funding to charities and food banks throughout the region. EFSP funds can be used for a range of services, including mass shelter, food distribution through food pantries and food banks, and transition assistance from shelters to stable living conditions.